

Westminster Chimes

Coming in to be nurtured, going out to serve

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Farewell to Anne Stevenson

Assistant Director of Music for Handbells Anne Stevenson will be retiring from her position at the end of May. Sunday, May 10, will be her last time leading our bell choir in worship. We hope you'll join us in our sanctuary at 10:30 a.m. that day as we recognize Anne's contributions to our music program and to our community. We will also celebrate her that day during fellowship time following worship. Here, in her own words, is more about Anne and her musical legacy:



You first came to Westminster in 1996 and joined in 1998. What drew you to our community?

My interest in handbells brought me to Westminster. After moving to Portland, I wanted a church in Northeast Portland where I could continue to ring. I bought my house from Gretchen Nelson, who recommended Westminster. Thanks to a concert program I picked up at a handbell conference that listed the area bell choirs participating, Westminster was already a consideration. The helpful introduction from Gretchen, the kindness of Kay Tousley on the first Sunday I attended worship, and the church's warm and open environment led me to join the Westminster community.

How did you get involved with bell ringing, and later, bell choir directing?

I started bell ringing in 1990 with a choir in La Grande, Oregon, enjoying the group aspect right away. When the director took a leave of absence, I was asked to fill in due to my musical experience. After moving to Portland, I joined Westminster's bell choir—first as a substitute, then as a regular member. In 2000, when Westminster Concert Bells purchased a set of hand chimes as additional instruments, I created a Junior High Chime Choir to support the Youth Handbell Choir. In the summer of 2003, I volunteered to be the interim bell director (only for one year!) after David Greger retired and have continued in this role ever since.

What do you love about playing or directing the bells?

Bell ringing requires teamwork, with each ringer handling specific bells to create a unified sound. Directing the choir involves choosing enjoyable pieces for both ringers and the congregation, assigning bells thoughtfully, and encouraging growth by balancing challenging and easier works. Our rehearsals are marked by camaraderie and fun, and it's this sense of shared joy in music and fellowship that I love and will miss the most when I retire.

Continued on next page

Farewell to Anne Stevenson (Cont.)

What is one of your favorite memories with the bell choir?

In 2014, the Westminster Concert Bells commissioned a composition from Kevin McChesney, a renowned figure in the world of handbell music. The resulting work, titled *Variations on Westminster Quarters*, was especially fitting for our church. It brought great joy to the choir to have a piece uniquely crafted for us, and the experience of learning and performing it for the congregation was truly memorable. I look forward to the possibility of the choir ringing this special piece again someday.

What role has music played in your life?

Music has always been part of my life. My father collected big band and classical records, and my mother played piano, which inspired me to take lessons at a very young age. I continued studying music all through elementary and high school, served as my high school choir accompanist, began organ lessons at thirteen, and became the junior organist at my church. (There were three organists and I was the youngest, so I definitely was the “junior organist”!) As an adult, I have taught piano and participated in various community and church choirs and bell ensembles.

When you retire from your role as Assistant Director of Music for Handbells, what’s next for you?

Though I am stepping down from directing the bell choir, I will, of course, stay involved at Westminster—singing in the Chancel Choir, serving as co-chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, and helping on the Worship and Music Committee. I’m also excited to be able to have the opportunity to spend Sunday afternoons and evenings with my daughters who live in Wilsonville, have some long weekends available to visit my two granddaughters (one in Eastern Oregon and one in Denver), and do more traveling whenever possible.

Anything else you’d like to add?

Serving in music ministry leadership at Westminster for the past twenty-five years has been a joy and a privilege. The support of the Westminster staff, especially the help and encouragement of Debbie Glaze and the collaboration with Leslie Lehmann and Michael Barnes, has greatly enhanced this experience. Most of all, I am deeply grateful to our bell choir musicians for their dedication and enthusiasm, which have made these years rewarding and memorable.

Building Community Connections with Chili

Making chili has created opportunities for connection. Every month, Beth Outterson puts forth a call to those who enjoy cooking together, and they make enough chili to serve 30-50 people and deliver it to Future Generations Collaborative/Barbie’s Village. Along with the chili and condiments, they bring juice boxes for the families. Betsy McKay always makes the dessert! To accommodate the families’ needs, the chili is always vegan with organic ingredients. The chili helps to support many programs, including the preschool and domestic violence programs. The provision of a meal allows the members of the Indigenous community to gather for sustenance of themselves and their connections with each other. If you would like to participate in this important Westminster effort, reach out to Beth, and she will give you an opportunity to stir the pot! If you need Beth Outterson’s e-mail address, please contact the church office.



Pastor's Column

The Rev. Gregg Neel at 503-287-1289, ext. 114

The "church" should NOT be involved in politics!

Many of us are watching (the week of April 12, 2026) the conflict between the current president of the U.S. and current pope. It is a fascinating time in world history because the pope is an American citizen. The pope is speaking out about world events and speaking to Roman Catholics in governments around the world who are advocating for the U.S./Israeli war against Iran.

What does the Presbyterian Church (USA) say historically about the church and government? An important history lesson to remember is that many Presbyterians spoke out against King George III and the government of England and then "supported" war, leading to the Revolutionary War.

In 2002, a document one can find on the PC(USA)'s website states, "Inasmuch as those who carry civil authority are God's servants, they are to be obeyed. One of the marks of a 'good Christian' in the Reformed tradition is responsible participation in the life of the civil society and obedience to its proper edicts and laws. On the other hand, Calvin says Paul also makes clear that those in authority are charged by God to use their authority for the ordering of human life and to the end that 'men (sic) breathe, eat, drink, and are kept warm.' This is critical for understanding our history as Presbyterians in dealing with those in authority, especially where civil authority is not used for the common good." (The article is titled: "What is the relationship between our faith in Jesus Christ and our loyalty to our country?")

Presbyterians believe that we are to "call out" those in civil authority when authority is not used for the common good.

The music director of the church in Indiana where I served said in a staff meeting the following, which I have never forgotten: "Politics is nothing more than people working together." I just saw a very unusual interview of three U.S. Catholic bishops given with the pope's blessing. The bishops were asked, "What do you say to people in the pews who say, 'I don't want to hear about politics from my priest?'"

The response, "Fine, I want to preach the Gospel. I want to promote peace in the world." Another bishop said, "What we are seeing in the world is a profound level of human suffering and that's what motivates us."

Whether you have an affinity toward the Presbyterian Church or not, let us all remember, our loyalty is to God. We serve God first.

Peace,


Save the Dates: All-Church Retreat

Please save the dates of July 17 through 19, 2026, for Westminster's next All-Church Retreat! We will be holding the retreat at Menucha Retreat and Conference Center (menucha.org) again, which is about 30 minutes away from Portland in the Columbia River Gorge. It's a beautiful property with delicious food and a pool. More information, including how to register, will be announced soon. We hope you will join us!

Adult Education Programming in May

Classes are held at 9:15 a.m. on Sundays in the chapel and on Zoom. To get on the Adult Education Program's e-mail list, contact Jonathan at office@westprespdx.org.

May 3

Turning Divisions into Opportunities

Gary Scharff, a field leader from Braver Angels, will provide us with an introduction to Braver Angels, a civic organization whose mission is to facilitate opportunities for communities to come together to discuss our country's division. In addition to working with citizens around the country, Braver Angels: facilitates workshops, debates, and forums teaching civil discourse in schools; utilizes the arts, through theater, photography, music, and film to strengthen communities and help bridge the political divide; and works with people of faith to engage in a respectful way about our divisions in a way that helps our communities flourish. Visit Braver Angels (braverangels.org) for more information.

May 10

Advocating to End Food Insecurity Elizabeth Braatz, Oregon Food Bank

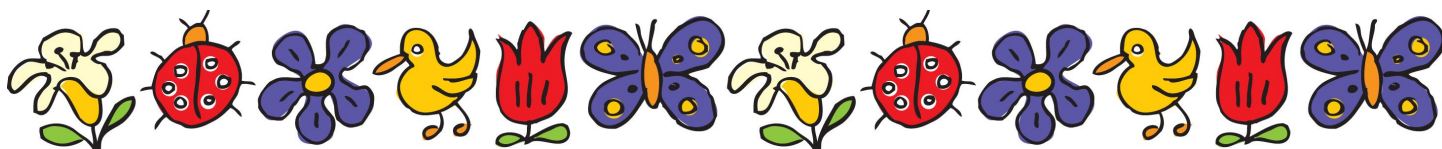
Hunger is not a personal choice or individual experience. It can happen because of things we can't control, and it affects all of us. Speakers from the Oregon Food Bank will discuss the movement it is building to end hunger now and prevent it long-term by fighting for policies under which all of us can thrive. Food For All Oregonians is an incredible coalition of over 185 organizations working to make sure food is available to all Oregonians.

After May 10

We're working to bring you additional classes during the month of May. We will post more information as it becomes available on our adult education website page, here:

<https://westprespdx.org/connect/adult-education/>

After May classes are over, the program goes on summer break.



Odiorne Scholarship Opportunity

Did you know that Westminster grants scholarships to students who are high-school graduates or GED recipients? The church has been awarding financial aid to students in higher education for over 60 years. These students are those who will be incoming freshmen through seniors at accredited colleges and universities (including community colleges) or those attending trade schools, certified professional licensing programs, or graduate school.

If you are an interested member or active participant at Westminster, or if you're a qualified church staff member, please consider applying for an Odiorne Scholarship. The link to application information is <https://westprespdx.org/odiorne/>. If you have questions, please email the Odiorne Scholarship Committee at Odiorne@westprespdx.org.

This year's application deadline is Tuesday, June 30, 2026. Applicants will be notified regarding scholarship decisions later in the summer, including final amount, details of dispersal, and timing. Please consider if this scholarship opportunity may be right for you.

Meet Your Elders - Bonnie Magura, Class of 2026

In this column, we'll introduce you to the elders who serve on Westminster's Session. If you're a Westminster member who might be interested in being an elder, contact the Reverend Gregg Neel for more information.

Which committee(s) do you serve on, and what do you do with them?

I serve as co-chair of the Property Committee. I have co-chaired the committee for three, three-year terms and have been a member of the committee since 2014. The Property Committee works to restore, maintain, and develop the Westminster church facility and its grounds to serve the needs of the church and its mission. Typically, this involves working with our director of church operations and committee work, as well as actively working on projects.

I also serve on the Finance and Administration Committee representing the needs of the Property Committee and working on the overall budget and financial concerns of the church.



How long have you been active at Westminster?

My husband, Larry, and I have been members of Westminster for 32 years. I have been part of a fellowship group for 32 years and participate in study groups and adult education. I volunteer with Family Promise, memorial receptions, women's retreat planning, art show set up, provide meals for members in need, and regularly support social service drives.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I enjoy spending time with my husband, Larry; our three children; and four grandchildren. I love to hike, walk, garden, read, paint, travel, and explore nature, particularly geology. I also attend lectures, demonstrate in protest events, and join with my neighbors in writing postcards for voting.

Do you have pets?

We have two border collie grand-dogs and a grand-kitty. We also visit with a parade of dogs being walked on a park pathway next to our house.

What's something people probably don't know about you?

I am a retired PPS middle-school science teacher. I have taught college classes and workshops in field geology and seismology and NSF-funded workshops for educators in the science of great earthquakes and preparedness in coastal cities in Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. I wrote curriculum for EarthScope Consortium and ShakeAlert Earthquake Early Warning, and I was appointed to the Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission. In 2003 I received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching for Oregon, sponsored by the NSF.

What's one thing you enjoy about serving on Westminster's Session?

I enjoy the leadership work of the church with a group of caring, creative, faithful, community building, visionary people.

Children and Youth Sunday

Children and Youth Sunday is coming up on May 3rd! Join us at 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary for a worship service led by some of the children and youth at Westminster. There will be some traditional elements and some elements thought up by the youth that will highlight their voices and vision—it is bound to be a life-giving and invigorating service! See you then.



Session Action in April

In its April 2026 meeting, the Session conducted the following business:

- Two members of the Commission on Ministry from the Presbytery of the Cascades did a triennial visit. The Session discussed how God is working through the congregation, highlighting areas such as youth engagement, community outreach, visual arts, and social justice initiatives.
- The Strategic Planning and Visioning Task Force presented an interim report.
- Martha Wilson, the chair of the Building Assessment Task Force (BAT), reported the task force's findings regarding building needs, with sanctuary upgrades and accessibility being the top priorities identified through a congregational survey. The task force was dismissed with thanks for all their work.
- Session formed a new three-person task force consisting of Martha Wilson, Sherry Symington, and Jonathan Dyer to further investigate and recommend next steps for addressing building needs. The task force will report in August.
- The Reverend Junha Kim prayed for the joys and concerns of the members of the Session.

Vision and Strategy Task Force Update

Join us on Sunday, May 17, after worship during fellowship time in the Great Hall as the Vision and Strategy Task Force shares their concluding findings from a year of research and talking and writing! There will be treats, and we hope that you will leave feeling inspired. Thanks for keeping up with us! –Lindsey, Marcia, McKenna, Peggy, Thomas, and Ted

May Birthdays



We rejoice with those members, friends of our congregation, and staff who celebrate birthdays in May:

5/1	Kori Kennedy, Mark Hess	5/20	Nicky Larson, Carmen Timberlake, Melinda Hinkley
5/2	Melissa Shuping, Laurie Newman	5/21	Melanie Clark, Kathryn Gibson
5/3	Elaine Durst, Sherry Symington, Bob Brown	5/22	Anne Orwig
5/4	Cindy Christensen	5/23	Ardath Lilleland, Janet Moore, Ron Notdurft, Steve Chapin, Ted Kostek
5/5	Brianna Parcel	5/24	Ruth Richmond, Julia Groff
5/6	Sue Carrico, Sally Edmiston		Traylor, Jeff Lohr, Steve Mitchell, Debbie Adamson-White
5/7	Miriam Rohrbaugh	5/25	Jamie Jubitz, Jamie Howsley
5/8	Kay Simmons, Christine Parno, Claire Patin, Jim Galloway	5/26	Natcharee Ayanaputra
5/9	Liz Young	5/27	Jan Hartman, Lindsey Hubbard-Groves
5/10	Abby Ross, Tina Welborn, Andy Harris	5/28	Gevin Gregory, Janet Murphy
5/13	Margaret Brown, Debbie Mettler	5/29	Jun Kim
5/14	Laura Moog Benice		
5/16	Shirley Reynolds		
5/17	Rosalie Neilson, Rod MacDonald		
5/19	Judy Harrison		

LIVING MEMORIAL LANDSCAPE FUND

To honor individuals and enhance our public appearance and community outreach, the Session has approved a special fund for landscape improvements. The goal is to raise \$7,500 by Labor Day. Any excess funds will be spent on other landscape upgrades. **The deadline to submit the funds and form is Monday, August 31, 2026.**

Projects include:

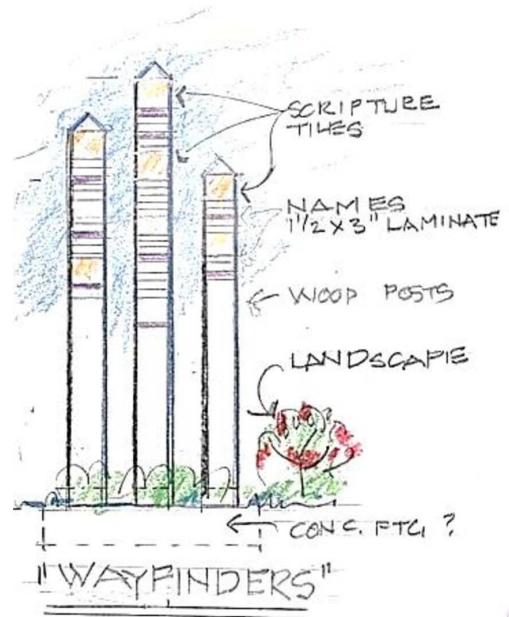
- Tree roses in the rose garden
- A front entry rose garden
- Potted shrubs at major entries
- Additional trees and plantings
- Outdoor seating and infrastructure



Gifts of any level are welcome and may be made in honor or in memory of anyone. Recognition will be published in the Chimes and bulletin in the fall. In addition, we'll have a permanent art installation called "Wayfinders" under the flowering cherry tree at the west end of the rose bed. (See sketch.)

DONOR LEVELS (Select One):

- _____ Rose, \$100
- _____ Tree Rose, \$250
- _____ Planter, \$500
- _____ Groundskeeper, \$750
- _____ Eden Angel, \$1000
- _____ Other (indicate amount), \$ _____



Today's date: _____

Your name: _____

E-mail and/or phone number: _____

Made in memory of: _____

OR

Made in honor of: _____

Check one: _____ My check is enclosed with my completed form.
 _____ I have donated by credit card via the church website. Date of online gift: _____

Instructions to donate online:

- Go to westprespx.org (select the "online giving" button).
- Make a gift, putting "LIVING MEMORIAL LANDSCAPE FUND" in the memo line of the online form.
- Submit this completed form to the church office.

Please submit this form and funds to the church office by August 31, 2026. You may also put your form and money into an envelope and put it in the offering plate during Sunday worship. For further information, contact the church office (at 503-287-1289 or info@westprespx.org) or contact John Barker.

Westminster Presbyterian Church
1624 N.E. Hancock Street
Portland, OR 97212-4443

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Phone (503) 287-1289
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www.westprespdx.org
Office Hours: M-Th, 9-4:30; Fri 9-12
The Rev. Gregg Neel
Pastor
The Rev. Lindsey Hubbard-Groves
Associate Pastor for Congregational Life
The Rev. Junha Kim
Associate Pastor for Youth, Mission &
Community Engagement

Publications

Jonathan Dyer: office@westprespdx.org
503-287-1289, ext. 111

Chimes articles are due by 5 p.m. on the dates listed below.

- ◆ May 13 for June 1-30
- ◆ June 10 for July 1-31

If you want to receive the monthly Chimes newsletter electronically, you can sign up for an e-subscription at this website: <http://eepurl.com/cCazsL>.

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